

MEMOIR

OF

FREDERICK SMITH,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.



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M E M O I R
OF THE LATE
F R E D E R I C K S M I T H .
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

A MEMOIR, with some other writings of the late Frederick Smith, of the Haymarket, afterwards of Croydon, England, was placed in the hands of a friend, by some of his surviving relatives, with liberty to select for publication such parts as might appear suitable. The following extracts are from the

MEMOIR.

I was born in London the 28th of Sixth month, 1747, and before I was five years of age was put to a boarding-school. I was naturally of a lively disposition, and very early susceptible of evil impressions, so much so, that I have frequently looked back with admiration to observe how soon the enemy makes his inroads. Before I was nine years old, there was scarcely an evil [incident to children of that age] with which I was not acquainted, and which I had not a hankering after; though I believe I sometimes had some serious thoughts, but so trifling that I hardly recollect them.

When I was about thirteen and a half years of age, I was taken from school and sent to London to occupy a situation under government, in the General Post Office. My relations were opulent people, and kept a great deal of what is called fashionable company, yet they did all they could to restrain me from following those evil propensities I so much delighted in. They were ignorant of the bent of my inclinations, and of the progress vice had made in my heart, and endeavoured to prevent the [evil] seed from being sown. But alas! the work was begun; and being associated with many young lads, most of whom were under little or no restraint, whilst together we gave loose to our various inclinations; and I am ready to con-

clude, that from the age of fourteen till I was twenty, there were few who exceeded me in vicious conduct.

During this time for several years I did not enter a place of religious worship, except for some wicked purpose ; yet I never lost sight of a sort of idea of a Supreme Being, and I believe never went to sleep without endeavouring to say my prayers, not even when stupefied with liquor. This I consider to be a strong proof of the beneficial effect of parental care, in endeavouring early to impress on the minds of youth, day by day, their duty to their Creator.

During this career of wickedness, there seemed nothing to hinder my putting what was in my heart into execution ; so that, as to what the world calls pleasure, I knew no restraint ; the enemy continually finding out fresh food for my sensual and beastly appetite. At intervals, I providentially found a stop, and a language passed through me, “ Surely it will not be always thus with me ; I shall at some time or other be caught in the trap of the enemy ;” but such impressions lasted only for a few minutes. I remember once being so convicted in my mind of the progress sin was making in me, that I flung myself on my bed, burst into tears, and cried to the Almighty for help. I strongly felt my depravity and weakness, and fervently prayed for help and strength to resist evil, and for forgiveness for my past wicked conduct. But this impression did not last a great while ; I soon returned to my evil courses.

Owing to the kindness of my relations, at whose expense I lived, the greater part of my salary was given me for pocket-money ; so that I never troubled my parents for money, and they were ignorant how I went on. When I visited them in the country, on leaving them they used to give me very wholesome advice, and by their affectionate solicitude so wrought upon me as to make me resolve in my own mind to be more circumspect in my conduct, and to leave those companions to whom I was as injurious as they were to me. A few days after my return to London all these tender impressions [would be] obliterated, and I returned with redoubled vigour to an abandoned life.

Having received a fashionable education, and been instructed in all the accomplishments which, in the view of the world, constitute the gentleman, such as dancing, fencing, &c., I was equal to most in superficial knowledge, and was introduced into much fashionable company. I frequented balls, the theatres, musical entertainments, and other equally unprofitable amusements, till my 21st year, when, without the consent or knowledge of my friends, I married.

In consequence of this rash act I had now to struggle with some difficulties. I had during the last year or two been so extravagant as to contract debts, which, though not to a great amount, were the occasion of considerable embarrassment. Some heavy family afflictions which occurred at this period, brought me to a degree of recollection; and this was much assisted by the prudent demeanor of my wife, who, although she had consented to our marrying clandestinely, yet carried herself so circumspectly as completely to wean me from all my dissolute companions; and thus, through her means, under Providence, I was mercifully rescued from apparently certain ruin. Though most of our friends were disconcerted at the step we had taken, yet in a little time they became reconciled, and kindly assisted to increase my outward means; and as we were contented in our humble situation, and satisfied to live very frugally, also happy in each other, we were, as to outward matters, comfortable beyond our expectation.

About the year 1780, I had at times some serious impressions, and seemed to want something which outward enjoyments could not afford. For some time I attended the national worship, but not being satisfied, I frequented the meetings of others; and though I apprehended these were more zealous and sincere than the generality of those of the Church of England, yet my mind was so conscious of the deep wound which sin and corruption had made, that I was persuaded no superficial attempts could heal it. I had a prospect of something beyond all that I had yet seen or heard, though I could not as yet describe the whole of my feelings, except as they were brought into action. I was still a strange jumble of inconsistency, for some things of a gross nature remained with me.

In the year 1782, I was subpoenaed by the Post Office to give evidence at the Old Bailey, against a man for robbing the mail. A circumstance occurred during the trial which excited in me an additional degree of thoughtfulness. One of the witnesses gave evidence which, though of no great importance, was not, in point of fact, correct, and had I been called upon, I should have been obliged to contradict him. This circumstance led me to consider the nature of an oath: that it was a solemn appeal to the Almighty, that the matter then about to be asserted was the truth. In fact, I began to doubt whether the taking of an oath is, under the Christian dispensation, justifiable; for though but little versed in the Scriptures, I recollect that Jesus Christ had said, "Swear not at all." I was thus brought into a most trying situation, under the feeling of which I earnestly supplicated the Almighty that I might be excused from giving

evidence in this case ; and in great condescension and pity to my secret cries, He heard me and I was not called upon.

About this time I was brought to a serious recollection of the many gracious visitations of the Almighty to my poor wicked soul, and particularly his answer to my prayers, [not only in the instance] before related, [but also] in two others, during the dangerous illness of my dear wife, when I had earnestly and with many tears besought him to relieve her pain, which was very great and continued for many hours, and it immediately ceased. I also began more plainly to see the natural proneness there was in me to evil ; this I could trace back in myself to a very early age, and could recollect some instances of sinfulness and depravity which even then filled me with shame. Thus I was introduced to a view of the degraded and fallen state of man by nature ; and feeling my inability of myself to overcome my evil passions and inclinations, I was led inwardly and fervently to implore Divine help and instruction.

I continued in this seeking state for some time, when I became acquainted with a person belonging to the Society of Friends, who lived near us, at Walworth, whose company seemed very different to what I had been used to. A few months previously, the Quakers being mentioned in the course of conversation, my wife said, if ever she changed her religion, it should be to a Quaker, to which I replied, that the Quakers were a set of fools and had no religion in them. But now I was of a different mind, and I requested the Friend [above alluded to] to lend me some book relating to his principles, which at first he refused. Afterwards with some reluctance he lent me Barclay's Apology, cautioning me at the same time against too much earnestness in the perusal, and setting down as truths the sentiments of the author, till I had sufficiently weighed them in my own mind ; adding that he believed with Peter, " that God is no respecter of persons," but that those of all religious denominations " who fear him and work righteousness are accepted of him. I have often looked with much satisfaction at this conduct of the Friend, in not laying hands suddenly on me, and considered it a proof of his prudence and kindness ; and, indeed, the kind, parental care and solicitude for my spiritual welfare, manifested by himself and his wife, though I was not within the pale of their religious belief, instanced such a liberal, tolerant spirit, and freedom from bigotry, as convinced me that Friends were got far beyond most others in that day, in the substantial part of religion. I read the book with much attention, and was surprised to find that the fundamental part so exactly corresponded with the idea I had formed of the union

that subsists between God and his creatures. I was also much instructed many ways, especially respecting the meaning of the words Holy Ghost, of which I had before been totally ignorant, as I have reason to fear is the case with thousands, besides myself, who call themselves Christians. I could have said, as some did to Paul, "we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

One day, whilst I was reading Barclay's Apology, I told my wife I believed I should turn Quaker, the book I was then reading having opened my understanding respecting religion more than any book I had ever read; and that it was withal so simple, and corresponded so exactly with the Scriptures, that it appeared to me to be the very truth, or something to that purpose. She appeared to be much distressed at my expressing myself thus, and from that time did all in her power to divert me from my purpose. My wife tried many ways to prevail with me to alter my purpose, and at last with many tears entreated me to desist, telling me that her health was much impaired by her uneasiness of mind; (which I have reason to believe was really the case); at the same time pointing out to me the danger of our circumstances being materially injured by my losing my situation in the Post Office, and the distressing prospect of our becoming estranged from each other and our children divided, by my persisting in the intention of belonging to a different persuasion of religion from herself. I was at this time in the practice of attending the meetings of Friends; but these arguments, together with the love I bore to my dear wife, induced me to promise her I would not attend them any more. I kept my word for a week or two, and for a while absented myself from the Friend's house who had been so kind to me; but I had no peace herein, for having found the pearl of great price, I soon perceived it would be necessary to sell all that I had, if I ever meant to purchase so choice a treasure. In a short time I secretly called on my friends as before, and borrowed John Richardson's Journal,* which was the first book of the kind I ever read; and I was surprised to find there were any persons of so late date who approached so nearly to the character of the saints of old, not being aware, at that time, of the universal efficacy of redeeming love; and that this principle will, in all ages, produce the same effects.

I was now called upon to give some proof of my love to Him who was thus graciously visiting me. I was subpoenaed to give evidence in one of the courts of Westminster, respecting a per-

* Republished in the 4th vol. of Friends' Library, Philada. 1840.

son's handwriting, to which I had been a witness. This brought me into a great strait, for I felt that I dared not take an oath, and my refusal, which could not be kept secret, I apprehended would endanger the loss of my situation. I called on my kind Friend, to advise with him. He saw my difficulty, and I believe felt for me in my distressed condition; but it seemed out of his power to assist me. I [afterwards] waited on the attorney, told him the difficulty I was under, and endeavoured to prevail on him to get some other person in my stead. But he could afford me no relief, except that he asked me if I could take the Quaker's affirmation. I told him I did not know what it was; but when he showed it to me, I felt no objection. He therefore promised to prepare the way for me in the court, that I might have as little trouble as possible. During the time I had to wait in and about the court, before I was called, which was about eight hours, I was exceedingly distressed in my mind. On being called, I informed the court I could not take an oath, and the affirmation was immediately offered to me. I instantly felt such a flow of peace and comfort to my poor tried mind, as I had never experienced before. I returned home joyful, and strengthened with the enriching balm of heavenly love in my bosom.

Although this event terminated [so favourably], it seemed probable, that in consequence of my objection to taking an oath, I should, at some future time, lose my situation under government. This was a continual exercise to me; and it seemed desirable that I should be prepared for such an occurrence, and having an opportunity of laying out my property in merchandise, without much consideration, I embraced it. This step laid the foundation of much future difficulty. At the request of my wife, I also engaged in partnership with a near relation of hers, which I was induced to do principally from a desire to convince her that I was willing to do all in my power to make her comfortable.

I had not entered into this engagement many weeks before what I had anticipated took place. I was subpoenaed to give evidence against a man who had robbed the mail. In this case the affirmation would be of no avail; and I very soon learned, that if I refused to take the oath, I should most probably lose my place. My distress was now very great; for I had discovered that my partner's affairs were in a worse state than I had before understood. Thus I had not only the prospect of losing my situation, but with it my only means of extricating myself from my difficulties, and carrying on my business; so that I was now likely to be left in a worse situation than if I had not embarked in trade.

The comptroller and his brother were greatly affected ; they considered me as their child, having brought me up from my youth, and treated me with parental affection. I was rapidly getting forward in the situation I held, and to see my fair prospect thus blasted, and that I was obstinately bent [in their view], not only on my own ruin, but also that of my family, was a great disappointment to them, and grieved them much. They tried to persuade me to alter my resolution, but in vain ; and the comptroller reluctantly complied with my request. The kindness of my relations at this time was more than I could well bear ; and was a greater trial to me than all the threats and unkindness of my superiors in office. I was interrogated by the secretary and solicitor ; and threatened by them, that if I did not comply, I should be imprisoned. By order of the Board, I attended at the Post Office, to give my reasons to the postmasters-general. I was treated with much unbecoming rudeness ; and endeavours were used to have me instantly dismissed ; but the solicitor informed the Board that it could not be done till I had been put upon my trial, whether I would take the oath or not. I was therefore ordered to attend at the assizes [at Aylesbury] on the 8th of the Third Month, 1784.

At this time, however, my wife was taken seriously ill, occasioned by the distress of her mind in viewing the awful prospect before us, and the uneasiness my conduct had given her ; which was not to be wondered at, seeing that what I did to procure peace of mind to myself, appeared to involve her and our young family in ruin. She was so ill on the day I was obliged to leave her, that the physician who attended her expressed his fears of her recovery. I was, however, obliged to leave her ; and I took my farewell of her under much affliction, having great cause to fear we should never meet again in mutability. This was on a First-day. I went to Westminster Meeting in the morning, and [afterwards] accompanied the solicitor to Aylesbury : he behaved kindly to me, and the company who were collected there showed me more respect than I had expected.

The last evening but one that we were together, the solicitor, who sat at the head of the table, desired us to fill our glasses ; but, having all along felt a particular objection to countenancing drinking, I had uniformly refused toasts ; and now, being urged more than usual, I gave them my reasons for refusing. Still, however, the company continued to press me ; and, to prevent further solicitation, I filled my glass with water only. This answered their purpose ; and a scene of as great indecency and confusion followed as I had ever witnessed. I took my candle

and went to bed, lamenting that, in all probability, I had been the cause of it: for, had I remained firmly attentive to my inward feelings, I might have been instrumental in convincing those present of the folly of the practices they were in. It was a lesson I have often recurred to, when my resolution has been tottering under trials of faith and obedience.

And now the time came for me to manifest my love to Him who had allured me out of Egypt into the wilderness, who had spoken peace to my guilty soul, and had forgiven my many transgressions and backslidings. Under a sense of these mercies I appeared in court; and when I was called, I told the judge without hesitation, that I could not take an oath; which having done, my heart seemed to overflow with sweet peace, and I was strengthened to bear the scurrillity and ill-natured remarks of a counsellor, who had no doubt been hired for the purpose of making me appear odious to those present, and to give the postmasters-general a plea for displacing me. He then kindly asked me if I chose to take the oath, which I refusing to do, he told me I might leave the court if I pleased, as they had nothing further to say to me. I immediately hastened home, where I found my wife much better; and I had the abundant satisfaction to learn from her, that during my absence, at the time she appeared in the greatest danger, her mind was so filled with comfort and Divine love, that she longed to be dissolved; and she believed that, had she gone then, it would have been well with her. This account filled my poor heart with gratitude to the Lord, for thus remembering me in the midst of my deep probations; for surely no one had greater reason to be humbled in the dust than myself, an unworthy sinner.

Having been thus mercifully helped through so many difficulties, I experienced a degree of strength to encounter fresh ones. I was now in expectation of losing my place in the Post Office, the justice of which I could hardly reconcile, seeing that my refusal to comply with the requisition of my employers was well known to arise from [adherence to] integrity of principle, and not from a desire to evade any part of my duty as a servant to the public.

In a few days, I was ordered to attend the Board. I was told I should not be immediately dismissed, as I had represented how I was circumstanced in other matters; but that I should have liberty to attend the office as usual for two or three weeks, till I could turn myself about. But I was much surprised and disappointed the next morning, when on entering the office, I was told that it was the express orders of the postmasters-

general, that I should not do any more duty ; and I was refused even the indulgence of going to my drawer. This appeared the hardest of all my trials. It was unexpected ; and I could not but sit down in my room and weep aloud.

Seeing how involved in difficulties we were, my opening this matter to my wife was a severe trial to me, and none but the Almighty could conceive the inward distress I suffered on being brought into this humiliating situation. I had now scarcely a friend to whom I could open my mind ; and my father and other relations treated me with coldness, especially the former, who declared he would never do anything for me. None offered me any assistance, and I dared not open my situation to Friends, lest they should suppose I courted the Society for gain. My wife too, (who was violently opposed to Friends,) perhaps with a view of forcing me to return to my former way of thinking, appeared uncommonly bitter against me ; so much so, that, in the hurry of her resentment, she left the house, with the determination, as she said, never to return, and took the children with her. I entreated her, before she left, not to prosecute her intention, nor did I expect she would, till she put it into execution. She was at a relative's at Richmond for sometime ; and, while she was there, I wrote to her in as moving a manner as I was capable, to request her return. She came [afterwards] to get clothes for herself and the children, when I renewed my entreaties with many tears, but in vain. In this season of deep distress, the love of God through Christ was my only comfort ; and in this I felt experimentally that I was not forsaken by Him for whom I suffered such severe trials and conflicts. Under the pressure of them I wrote as follows :—“ My brethren are put far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house count me for a stranger : I am an alien in their sight. My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for my children's sake of mine own body. All my friends abhorred me ; and they whom I loved are turned against me. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness. But I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

After an absence of several weeks, my wife returned to me ; and I can truly say I received her joyfully.

In the beginning of 1785, I was kindly noticed by a few Friends, whose society I very much enjoyed. In the first month of this year, George Dilwyn and Samuel Emlen, who were visiting the families of Friends in Westminster quarter,

expressed an inclination to sit with me, and I met them for that purpose at George Stacey's. I felt in an unusually disconsolate state, and unable to see anything but the impurity of my heart. The subject of their testimony was to encourage faithfulness in little acts of dedication that were required of me; intimating I was not to suppose that, because I had suffered for the cause of truth, the work was done; that there was still a great deal to do, and perhaps to suffer; and that it is only by patience and watchfulness, and keeping the eye single to the great Master, that we can be safe; that seeing we are weak and insufficient of ourselves to do anything to His glory, we must seek for ability to serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; that by the purity of our conduct we may prove ourselves worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. The upright, honest dealing of these Friends was a stimulus to me to press through every difficulty and discouragement.

The adoption of the plain language was a great trial to me, and it was a long time before I could fully give up to it: and even after I had accomplished it, and had continued faithful for some weeks, my strength failed me, and I nearly gave it up; but by attending to the secret reproofs of instruction, I was favoured with strength to resume this part of my duty, though I found it much more difficult to return, than it was in the first instance to conform to the practice. Thus, by unwatchfulness, and not attending to the pointings of duty in what appeared little things, I was frequently brought into much distress; but when faithful to the voice of Truth, I was at times favoured with great peace and comfort, and I found I gained strength in the holy warfare. Though neither dress nor address at first appeared of much importance to me, yet, as I faithfully yielded to the teaching of Divine grace and truth, I was enabled to see the beneficial effects of [supporting] these parts of our testimony.

My natural disposition was volatile and lively; at the same time I was hasty, and impatient of contradiction. I scarcely seemed able at times to keep my vivacity within bounds, which was often a great trouble to me. I therefore abstained from animal food, &c., thinking that by mortifying the body, I should be able to conquer this enemy to my peace, as well as others by which I was assailed. This voluntary [abstinence] caused me much distress, being unable to give a substantial reason when I was questioned upon the subject by my wife and others. I continued [in this course] for some months, till my natural strength was much reduced, while my animal spirits were

greatly increased ; and I thus discovered that all human means, not in the Divine economy, are insufficient to bring about [the work of regeneration ;] nothing short of the light and power of Jesus Christ being able to effect this great and important work. For many months I had to travel on under the pressure of outward discouragements ; so much so, that there was little appearance of my getting forward in business, though at some times the prospect was more cheering than at others. Keen was the distress that I suffered, and many the tears that I shed. I had also a host of enemies within, whereby I was kept in a state of continued warfare, fearful lest I should not be able to stand my ground, and, after all my sufferings, bring reproach on the Truth.

My dear wife was all this time unable to comprehend the meaning of the peculiarity of my conduct by which we had been brought into these circumstances of difficulty ; and, not being reconciled thereto, she frequently upbraided me. This was a cause of great disquiet to us both ; [and it is likely my yielding to] the natural warmth of my temper, made my own path considerably more trying than it would have been had I borne with patience the contradictions I met with. I ought to have shown a greater degree of condescension, [and to have been] more like the Master, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.

It happened once that Timothy Bevington and John Burlingham, of Worcester, were on business in the neighbourhood, and, though unacquainted with me, they agreed to call on me. After dinner, with much difficulty, on account of my wife's objection to stillness, a religious opportunity was obtained, wherein J. B. gave us some excellent advice, and at the same time told me he had an assurance that, if I kept my place, my wife would be given to me ; an occurrence I could at that time have no prospect of, nor had I faith to believe it.

Although I was much oppressed, as above represented, yet there were seasons of sweet enjoyment permitted me, wherein my cup might be said to run over. Thus was I led on through various dispensations, during which I could not but wonder, admire, and adore the gracious hand that was thus mercifully conducting me.

About the year 1786 several things occurred which evidenced the care of the Good Shepherd towards me, a poor worm. He in mercy saw meet to disclose himself to me, and by the might of his own power manifested that he was able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham, if I did not reject so great salvation. I had still great difficulties to struggle with,

and had none to look to for help but the blessed Redeemer : the Lord alone was my support. The difficulties we were under produced great humiliation.

[The writer, after stating that himself and wife had in their prosperity enjoyed many outward comforts, and that now, in their reduced condition, duty and necessity combined to induce them , make sacrifices which by some would have been consider'd costly ; and that among other things, a sideboard of plate was disposed of, proceeds :—] to be thus reduced was no small trial to flesh and blood ; but it [the plate] was called for, and it was given up. In our straitened circumstances, it would have been folly to purchase it ; and now, possessing comparatively nothing, vanity alone could be the inducement for keeping it.

This year my business increased. On taking stock, I found I had just about enough to pay all my creditors twenty shillings in the pound. Such being the case, I thought I would not again run the hazard of any person losing anything by me, unless with his own consent. I therefore, upon mature deliberation, came to the humiliating conclusion to call my principal creditors together, and acquaint them with the exact state of my affairs, and to offer to give up my property to them if they chose to accept it ; but if they were willing to let me go on in business I intended to avail myself of their kindness. One day, while at dinner, pondering this subject in my mind, and bewailing the trying circumstances to which I was reduced, I was so overcome by my feelings that I burst into tears, (my family being all around me,) and mentally poured out my soul to my Heavenly Father. While in this humble situation of mind, a letter, per post, was delivered to me. It was from a person of property, who had married a relative of my wife's, and was to this effect :—

“Sir :—I have made my will and have left your wife £—— ; but believing it may be of more use to you now than it may be at my death, you are at liberty to draw upon me at sight. I am, Sir, your humble Servant,” &c.

The person lived at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His wife was dead. I had never seen him nor corresponded with him, and my wife had only seen him when she was a child ; so that we could have no expectation of any such communication from him. This sum was sufficient to enable me to carry on my business without risk to my creditors ; and my poor tried soul was bowed in humble gratitude [to my Heavenly Father], for having thus manifested his loving-kindness towards me, and confirmed the everlasting truth, that “for the oppression of the

poor, for the sighing of the needy, he would arise." Surely, this was a memorable token of his fatherly care over his children. I was sensible that there was none in heaven but Him, nor in all the earth that I could depend upon but Him; to Him alone I wished to render all the praise.

The time now came that Friends began to look towards my being received into membership. I was visited, by appointment of the Monthly Meeting, by a committee of, I believe, judicious Friends, who were not willing to take things by outward appearance only; for I believe I thought quite highly enough of myself, and supposed I had made considerable progress in religious experience. But the first visit convinced me of my error; and I was much humbled under a sense of my own emptiness and want of all things. I remained much exercised till the Friends had another opportunity with me; when to myself I appeared much darker than before, and, according to my own feelings, in no situation to be received into membership. I was also much deserted, and tried with many close inward conflicts; and, as the Friends gave me little or no encouragement, I apprehended I was shut out from the blessed unity of the Spirit, both with the Almighty and my beloved friends. Great was my distress and searching of heart at this season of deep humiliation; here self was of no estimation. I often thought the pain and exercise I had to pass through was more than I could well bear, and seriously feared the effects of my present trouble. In the midst of this close trial, on the Sixth-day, previous to the Yearly Meeting, I was informed by a Friend that the Monthly Meeting had acknowledged me as a member, and that I was therefore at liberty to attend the Yearly Meeting. I cannot express the joy I felt, and the favour I considered it, to be united to that body with whom I had so long felt a union; and great were my cries that I might know preservation from evil, that I might not be permitted to bring reproof on the ever-blessed Truth. I have often, on looking back, had to admire the goodness of the Almighty to my poor soul in suffering this dispensation, and that I was not admitted into the Society in a superficial manner, nor made to think better of myself than I deserved.

Although my dear wife and myself were not yet so united as I could have wished, yet there appeared some ground gained. I have already stated that Timothy Bevington, in a religious opportunity, spoke encouragingly to us. Some months afterwards, on meeting him again, he told me he recollects what had come before his mind at that time; and, though what he had said, was not yet realized, he, notwithstanding, had a re-

newed belief that "my wife would be given to me." I had been very cautious at all times of saying any thing by way of persuasion as to my wife's religious movements, except that I sometimes urged her to the attendance of her own place of worship.

Her health was often very indifferent. The air of London did not suit her; so that we had for a considerable time been under the necessity of having a lodging out of town, where she frequently remained for several days. This was the case near the latter end of this year, and I was left in town. One day, while serving a customer in the shop, I felt the sweet influence of heavenly love in a remarkable degree, and at the same time, such a powerful union with my dear wife, that I was overcome with the sensation; and, having dismissed the customer as speedily as I could, I went up stairs to give vent to my feelings, where I continued the greater part of the day. Under this influence, I felt an inclination either to speak or to write to her on the subject of a nearer religious fellowship. I was not, however, in haste to put it into practice, but waited till the next day, that I might, when my mind became more settled, judge of the propriety of such a step. The next day, on sitting down before Him by whom I wished to be rightly instructed, I again felt the same sweet impression; when, without hesitation, I wrote a few lines to her, expressive of what I felt. I took the letter in the evening, and soon found that the Master had been there before me. She read what I had written several times over, but said nothing. After a time, I ventured to begin the conversation, though in much fear and brokenness; and I told her all that I had felt. She was much affected at the relation, and asked me at what time of the preceding day it was that I felt the impression I spoke of. I replied that the clock struck eleven as I was goin' up stairs, on leaving the shop. She said it was very remarkable, for just at that time she felt the same impression towards me, which had continued with her ever since, much to her comfort and consolation. We now mingled our tears of real joy together, under a sense of the gracious dealing of our Heavenly Father to our poor souls; and we had to admire that our present union had not been effected by any human means, but by the power of the Lord alone, *he having given my wife to me.* Great, I believe, were our desires that we might in no respect know a separation from each other, but that we might so walk before Him as to [experience] a continuance of his love and regard. I believe we both considered this extraordinary manifestation of Divine love, through which we were so sweetly united, as our spiritual marriage; for what we

had before known of love fell far short of that which we now felt towards each other ; nay, appeared as nothing in comparison of it. This, I apprehend, is what all ought to feel on entering into this solemn engagement.

My wife was at this time very much indisposed, and was visited with a great deal of pain, so that she was often ready to cry out from the agony she suffered ; but she was at the same time under a very precious visitation ; so that in the midst of her suffering, she felt such a flow of Divine comfort as made her bodily affliction appear as nothing to her.

In a few weeks after she had got better, she gradually left her former place of worship, and we soon had the satisfaction of experiencing "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It was no small alleviation of my troubles to have the help of my dear wife ; the union of her spirit was great comfort to me. She kept her place, I have often thought, far beyond myself, and afterwards became a steady and useful member of the Society [of Friends.]

My business was now gradually increasing, and I had a hope that I should not continue to suffer the severe discipline which I had experienced on account of trade ; a prospect appeared of my getting out of some of the difficulties I had been struggling against. For these and many other blessings, my heart was often bowed in reverence [to God.] My trials had the effect of enabling me from experience to sympathize with the afflicted. The path I had to tread seemed different from that into which many others had been introduced, but to which, after struggling for a time, I was generally obliged to submit ; this led me to feel for other [fellow-travellers] in the strait and narrow way, whose exercises were different from those of many who had obtained their religion by education.

The narrow path into which I was led, occasioned Friends to exercise a tender care over me ; those of more experience than myself watched over me for good, lest the enemy might deceive me by some of his transformations, which he usually attempts in the early days of the espousals of the Lord's children. The goodness of the Lord is great, and sometimes his visitations are marvellous beyond the comprehension of man. Such has been his condescension, that we have been instructed in the night season, at times when we have been ready to faint, and when human help seemed unavailable.

[I apprehended] there were few who had to endure greater conflicts than myself ; yet there were times wherein my gracious Master was pleased toavour me with his life-giving presence : and although [I was still] in my infancy as to religion, I could

discern the states of others: but I kept these things much to myself. As Mary did, "I pondered these things in my heart," thinking it not right to disclose the King's secrets. I thought it was not improbable that at some time I should be called to the ministry. I was at times ready to cry out to those who were standing in the way, and were not only idle themselves, but hindered those who were anxious to do the Master's work. I was not, however, hasty in this matter, the time not being fully come.

Among the occasions of my spiritual conflict was that of infidelity. This sore trial was altogether sudden and unexpected. I was one day looking over a review, and read a short sentence, which was an extract from the work of a Deistical writer. It was like an arrow, which made a deep wound in a vital part. I instantly became beclouded with doubts, and so distressed that I knew not what to do. I thought all I had been building up was in vain, and that there was no certainty as to the Christian principle. I felt it was an [attempt] of the enemy to ensnare me, and I was permitted for a season to doubt. I dared not open my mind to any one on the subject, lest it should be suspected that I was not sound in the faith. Thus I was brought to a full dependence on the Lord alone for help, believing that he only could cure the wound thus received. I endeavoured to keep my mind as quiet and easy as I could, trusting that the mystery would in the right time be unfolded. I was six weeks under this exercise; great were my cries to the alone Helper, and he heard me. Being at a meeting at Hammersmith, the Master saw meet to open my understanding, so that those things which had disturbed my peace became clear and beyond all doubt; and towards the close of the meeting, I had an evidence given me, that what was now opened to my view was not [exclusively] for my own individual instruction, but that there was a state then present who had drank large draughts of infidelity. I had not, however, strength to open my mouth in the meeting. Towards the close, a Friend expressed somewhat in the line I had been exercised in; which in some degree relieved me. On my return to London with a Friend, I mentioned the apprehension I had respecting the state above mentioned: he informed me I was right, there having been a Unitarian preacher present during the whole of the meeting.

The close of the year 1788 was a time of great exercise to my mind, and I experienced the buffetings of Satan in various ways. I was, notwithstanding, desirous under all to attend to the secret instructions of ~~my~~ holy Leader; and great were my

cries that I might not be permitted to fall, or be led into error ; so that my attention seemed much fixed, even as to my outward movements, to know his voice. One First-day morning, I had an impression, although so gentle as scarcely to be perceived, that it would be right for me to go to Hammersmith Meeting, which began at eleven o'clock. I could hardly come to a determination when the clock struck ten. There was no time to spare, the distance to Hammersmith being five miles ; so I even concluded to go there, and walked very fast. When I came to the wall beyond Knight's bridge, a man joined me, and walked beside me without saying a word. We both turned in to the meeting-house. It was a precious meeting ; and when it concluded, I hastened back, and attended Westminster Meeting, which began at two o'clock. On my return, the same man joined me again ; and all the conversation that passed between us was, I asked him whether he had been among [the members of a certain Religious Society] ; to which he replied, "Yes." We walked on together for some distance, but he could not keep up with me. Some weeks after this, I observed him come into Westminster Meeting, and sit down very solidly. He came again in the afternoon, and continued to attend [meetings on First-days] for some weeks ; after which I told him we met on Fifth-day mornings also ; whereupon he became a regular attender of [our mid-week meetings.] After a time, I took some [further] notice of him ; and he once told me that, having become much dissatisfied with continuing in the profession he was in, he had, on the day we walked together to Hammersmith, gone out with a view of observing which way Providence would lead him, and whichever way that should [appear to be,] he meant to try it, and if he could be easy therein, to follow it ; that seeing me walking very fast, he concluded I was going to some meeting, and he determined to follow me ; that he felt so much peace whilst in meeting, that he believed it would be right for him to give up to [attend our meetings,] which he could not at first do. But when he saw me, as, being resident in my neighbourhood, he often did, his conscience struck him for his cowardice ; and at last he was obliged to come and sit with us. He was a solid man, and was afterwards received as a member among us. I [record] this to show the necessity of ever attending to the tender feelings of the mind, and of taking care not to throw them hastily by, without giving them due consideration.

In the year 1789 I was tried in various ways ; much tempted, [experienced] much spiritual desertion, and [felt] keen distress for the loss of the beloved of my soul ; but there was an arm underneath which supported, and under every temptation a way

was made for my escape. Adorable condescension ! Every token of friendship, every act of kindness from my brethren, appeared to be more than I deserved. I became, in my own view, as the offscouring of the earth. During these close exercises and deep baptisms, my soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and I had no idea of what was to follow them. He who knows how to prepare and qualify his servants is pleased to do it in his own way ; not according to the weak apprehension of his creature man. He causes his children experimentally to know that his strength is made perfect in weakness, and that his grace is sufficient for them.

Very early one First-day morning, I felt an impression that I must go to Ratcliffe Meeting. I would have put it by, and endeavoured to reason it away ; but I was at last obliged to submit. Soon after I got there, very unexpectedly, John Pemberton and James Thornton came into the meeting. About an hour after the meeting was gathered, I felt an uncommon exercise, and afterwards a secret impulse to expose myself in supplication. Oh ! the awful distress I felt ! I was naturally averse to speaking in public, often experiencing it to be a great difficulty in our Monthly Meeting. After waiting a considerable time, in great conflict of spirit, apprehending myself so abundantly weak, and every way unworthy and unqualified for so important an undertaking, I suffered the meeting to break up, without performing what appeared to be my duty. Great was my distress and agony for this act of disobedience ; even such as is not to be described. The two Friends above-named asked me to go with them to the Friend's house where they were to dine, which I did ; and dear John Pemberton, perceiving that all was not right, asked me the reason, which I was not easy to inform him, and put it by. I thought, notwithstanding, if I ever should be thus called on again, I would endeavour not to refuse, and in the afternoon waited to feel an impulse of the same kind ; but the Lord's time is not our time. After the meeting was over, I went with J. P. and J. T. to a Friend's house at Bromley ; and after tea, at a religious opportunity there, I felt the exercise and the command, and, after much severe conflict, I gave up to express a few words in supplication. After the agitation was over, I became still and quiet, and humbly thankful that the Lord in mercy had accepted this small sacrifice from a rebellious heart. My kind friends, J. P. and J. T., expressed their unity with me, and comforted me under my present exercise, as we walked from the Friend's house. I returned home, sweetly rejoicing, having seen of the long travail of my soul, and become satisfied. This was on the 28th

of the Sixth Month, 1789, the day on which I was thirty-two years of age. Those only who have entered into this service from the necessity alone, after having been made willing through suffering to become anything or nothing, can form any true judgment of its awfulness; at least it so appeared to me, under the varied baptisms I had been plunged into, in order to be prepared for this engagement. To a diffident mind, and one who had at times experienced much Divine favour, it was a sore trial thus to expose myself, and become a preacher of righteousness to others. I was humbled as in the dust, and tears were my meat day and night for a season.

[After speaking of the exercise of his gift as a minister, on a certain occasion, he proceeds] :— It must be confessed, that when the true order is maintained, and every one moves in his proper place, the regular line of the ministry is beautiful, the harmony of the gospel is preciously felt, and the Lord is glorified. It is likely my beloved friend, James Thornton, apprehended I had let in some discouragement; and therefore, in order to reconcile me to my apparent hard service, he told me he had good unity with me therein, and especially on that day; and with other weighty and truly fatherly counsel, he told me I must not expect a smooth path, adding, “I believe thou wilt have many instructors, but few fathers; so be prepared, like a valiant soldier, to endure hardness in the Lord’s battles.”

Whilst J. Pemberton and J. Thornton were in London, we had the satisfaction of having much of their company. The former frequently lodged at our house. He was a man of an affectionate and kind disposition, with great humility, and a most benevolent mind. I understood that in his visit to Ireland, he expended among the poor of that nation more than a thousand pounds. Whilst travelling through Scotland, he was equally liberal to the poor [of that country]; and upon his return from a visit to the northern islands, he loaded a vessel with meal, as a present to these poor islanders.]

Very soon after I was received as a member of the Society of Friends, and had the privilege of sitting in their meetings for discipline, I thought I discerned the great advantage of private labour; of endeavouring with all privacy, if possible, to restore any individual that may have been overtaken with a fault; thus watching over one another for good in true love. I had [opportunities] very early of observing the benefit that resulted from such labour; and although, sometimes, it has been difficult at first to make a due impression, yet in most instances, when Divine aid was sought, the humble endeavour has been crowned with success. An instance in point occurred

about this time. A young man who had from early youth shown very many bad dispositions, and great depravity of mind, had at times engaged a good deal of my attention. He had an amiable mother to whom he behaved very unkindly. I frequently remonstrated with him on his unbecoming conduct, but without any seeming good effect. He indulged in loose company, in reading improper books, in attending the theatre, and other dissipations ; and gave liberty to his passions, till he became hardened, and seemed to have lost every trace of anything like tenderness of disposition. Whilst in his career of folly, his father, who had been very tender over him, died ; and his mother had been seized with a paralytic affection, so that her faculties and all her powers were much impaired. After the funeral, a Friend and myself called on this young man, and had a serious opportunity with him, wherein his state was spoken to in a remarkable manner. He was urged particularly to look at his awful situation, [and told] if he possessed any feeling at that moment, he could not but be sensible that the hand of Omnipotence was upon him, in order to show him that all power belongs to Him, and that it is in vain for us to struggle against it. It was also added, that although he might apprehend he could not be under a more heavy or trying dispensation than the present, yet he must not be surprised if a greater trial was at hand, in order that he might be instructed more deeply than he ever yet had been, in the necessity of obedience to the Divine command. He was much offended at this plain dealing, and he mentioned as much to a friend, withal adding that he had a great mind to have left the room, for he was sure no greater trial could befall him than the present. In less than two weeks from this time, I was very much surprised to learn that he had sent to me to let me know he was dangerously ill, and that he requested I would call upon him as soon as I could. As soon as I saw him, he made an humble apology for sending for me, [and said] he had so far come to his senses as to see that I had, for a length of time, been his true friend, and one in whom he could confide ; though he had foolishly resisted every attempt I had made to persuade him to more consistent conduct. I told him he never had offended me ; for all that I had ever done [in that respect,] had been with a view towards his real happiness ; that I was rejoiced to find him in such an agreeable disposition ; and that he might depend on a continuation of my friendly regard to him. On inquiry as to the state of his health, I found he had a violent fever ; and, from the irritability of his nervous system, there was great reason to suspect that in a few hours he would become delirious ; in which

case it would be very uncertain how the complaint would terminate. I therefore recommended that a physician should be sent for immediately, and that he should settle his affairs and make his will without delay, and in as concise a way as he could. All this was done previous to the coming on of the delirium. In the mean time, he earnestly requested I would not leave him more than I could help ; I therefore stayed with him as much as I could in the day-time, and took my turn to sit up with him at night. [Whilst thus engaged] I lost no opportunity of endeavouring to turn his attention to the important matter of his soul's salvation, through Jesus Christ. The delirium did not last so long as was at first expected ; but the fever continued several weeks. I knew he had imbibed Deistical notions, which I had feared would make it difficult, by the mere force of reason, to convince him of his errors : my dependence was on our divine Helper, who was pleased to bless the work. One day, I ventured to ask him if he had any objection to see a minister who was then in London, to which he objected, on account, (as he said,) of his always preaching from Solomon's Song. However, a few days afterward, when we were discoursing on the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, he broke out as follows : "Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock, and where thou restest at noon-day ; for why should I be as one that turneth aside." This he spoke with great earnestness, and burst into a flood of tears, more especially after repeating the latter [part of the] sentence. During some part of his illness, he was all agitation and fears lest he should die, and be utterly miserable. One night, in particular, he said he wished to go to sleep, but could not unless I would let him take hold of my hand. He awoke several times [during the night] in great horror, crying out, "O, save me, save me !" saying, when he was a little awake, "O, do not leave me, Frederick." After a time, he became more composed ; and he wished me to read some of Cowper's Hymns. I selected one, entitled, *The Contrite Heart* ; and having read it, he was much pleased with it ; said he should like to learn it, and if I would read it again, he would repeat it after me. The first stanza seemed to affect him much :—

"The Lord will happiness divine
On contrite hearts bestow ;
Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no."

When he came to the two last lines, he burst into tears, and with a degree of earnestness he cried out,

"Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no."

and this he did every time he repeated these lines. It was a great relief to my mind to observe the gradual unfoldings of Divine goodness to this young man. It was by the power of Divine grace alone, that he was made to see the excellency of the Christian dispensation. One day, while conversing on the sufferings and death of Christ, he seemed to enter into the nature of his suffering on the Cross, [and spoke of it] with that sensible feeling which none but those who are favoured to experience its efficacy could express themselves. "O," [said he] "the goodness of God ! to institute such a plan of redemption for poor, lost man. And did he suffer all these things for me ? Ah ! what must have been the sufferings of the holy Jesus, in bearing the sins of the whole world, when I am so incapable to bear my own ! Did he die for me, a wretched sinner ? O, the goodness of God !" These, and many more expressions, from true, religious feeling, he uttered, the tears trickling down his cheeks. He was brought to such a state as to believe, if he was favoured to die then, he should be received into glory, and seemed devoutly to wait for his change. But it pleased Him who orders all things well, gradually to restore him to health. When he perceived this was likely to be the case, he felt keen distress ; knowing, as he said, his multiplied weaknesses, and that his natural inclination for evil, which none knew but himself, caused in him a dread of again entering into the world, such as he could not express. He was finally restored to health.

It does not appear that Frederick Smith continued the memoirs of his life later than about the year 1791. The annexed extract concerning him is taken from the testimony of Kingston Monthly Meeting of Friends, being as follows :—

In the year 1789, he first appeared as a minister. He did not travel much in the work of the ministry, although it appears that, from the year 1790 to 1818, he, with the approbation of his Friends, performed journeys in that service through divers counties in England, and was often engaged in visits to the families of Friends ; and, having deeply partaken of the sufferings, as well as of the consolations of the Gospel, he was, in his ministry and otherwise, a true sympathizer with the afflicted and mournful, pouring in the wine and oil for their refreshment and comfort. A large portion of his time was employed in endeavouring to alleviate the distresses of his fellow-creatures ; and he was actively engaged in promoting many of the public institutions for benevolent purposes, as well as in devoting him-

self for the good of others in a more private capacity ; and was frequently engaged as a peace-maker in healing of differences. He was not only exemplary himself, but a zealous promoter of a diligent attendance of our religious meetings. His conversation was innocently cheerful, and he felt great interest for the welfare of the youth, over whom, from his affectionate disposition, he had great influence.

He had for a considerable time been liable to an affection of the heart, but did not appear to grow materially worse until the 20th of Fourth Month, 1823 ; when, after a restless night, in the morning he was seized with a violent paroxysm, which continued about three-quarters of an hour, when the pain subsided, but was succeeded by violent retchings, at intervals, until noon the next day, and from that time he appeared quite easy. On coming to himself, he said, "I believe my time will not now be long. God bless you, God Almighty bless you. I only desire resignation, and I feel resignation ; and am willing to suffer whatever the Lord may think fit to inflict upon me." He then prayed fervently, and with great energy, "Let not thy hand nor thine eye pity, till thou hast made me what thou wouldest have me to be. This has been my constant prayer for several weeks, I may say months, past : my sufferings have been very great for some hours, but I can bear all, everything ; ah, yes ! no matter what, if it be His will. Almighty God bless you all, and all my dear friends. O, Lord God, thy hand is upon me ; enable me to bear all to the end. I feel resigned either to stay or go ; the Lord's will be done. The Lord is good, He is very good. He has given me a kind and affectionate wife, dutiful and affectionate children ;" and he enumerated other blessings that excited his feelings of gratitude. After this, his breathing being very oppressive, it was with difficulty he could express himself; but his uniform reply to inquiries was, "I feel very comfortable." He lay in a peaceful, quiet state, and was sensible to the last. About two minutes before his departure, he asked one of his children to take his hand, and without sigh or groan expired, we trust full of peace and joy.

He died the 22d of Fourth Month, 1823, at his house at Croydon, and was interred on the 27th of the same at Croydon aforesaid, previous to a very large and solemn meeting ; aged sixty-six, a minister about thirty-four years.